

Pickney

📅 Fri, Dec 16, 2022 3:12PM ⌚ 1:00:09

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, newark, lived, ran, black, moved, blacks, job, began, white, money, city, naacp, sharpe, knew, neighborhood, turned, thought, sat, ward

SPEAKERS

Robert Curvin, Ted Pinckney

- R

Robert Curvin 00:05
There it goes. Okay, Ted, we start by just saying your name and where you live who you are, and we'll start talking. Okay.
- T

Ted Pinckney 00:15
Okay, let's see Theodore Pinckney. I live at 275 Delavan Ave here in the City of Newark. Which I've lived most of my life basically except when I was in school or in the service other than that, essentially I've lived in Newark.
- R

Robert Curvin 00:29
Where were you born?
- T

Ted Pinckney 00:30
Central Ward? South Ward? And now I'm in the north.
- R

Robert Curvin 00:34
So where were you born?
- T

Ted Pinckney 00:35
I was born in Newark City Hospital. That's what was called then. Then it's been called Martland since then and now it's called medicine and dentistry. But that time it was simply Newark City Hospital

hospital.

R

Robert Curvin 00:45

Right. You know who else was born in Newark City Hospital? Me. Yep. 1934.

T

Ted Pinckney 00:57

Okay, I was born in 1933.

R

Robert Curvin 00:58

Is that right? Okay. You got there before I did. How come you didn't clean it up?

T

Ted Pinckney 01:05

Too much corruption.

R

Robert Curvin 01:07

It was quite a place, wasn't it?

T

Ted Pinckney 01:08

Oh, yeah. Matter of fact, when I moved when we moved, to Somerset St in what was the Prudential Apartments which they're now tearing down, we moved in and onto the fourth floor because the first second or third floor were not finished. So we moved there while doing construction on the Prudential Apartments.

R

Robert Curvin 01:27

Can I ask you to take your glasses off? You're getting a lot of reflection from from the light coming in. So where did you go to grade school?

T

Ted Pinckney 01:40

Monmouth Street School. We called it Somerset Street, then Monmouth Street and then (unintelligible) Street. So it was basically a Jewish community. With some an influx of African Americans. When we went there Monmouth Street was basically a Jewish school. But they built those apartments and then more and more people moved in and Monmouth school became

more and more integrated, and then finally became a Black Grammar School. And from there, I went to Southside. Again, it was only like 25%, maybe 20% Black. But that was the black school because the other schools had maybe five or six.

R

Robert Curvin 02:13

So you finished in 53 or 54? 52 or 51?

T

Ted Pinckney 02:18

52, I finished from, uh, South Side. I was in Howard, Howard. I got my bachelor's degree in mathematics, Seton Hall, I got my master's degree and from University of Sarasota, I got the doctorate.

R

Robert Curvin 02:32

University of Sarasota, Sarasota, Florida. Uh huh. I see. And let's talk a little bit about Monmouth Street the neighborhood where you lived, and what life was like, for African Americans

T

Ted Pinckney 02:50

It was like, life, like the, old New Jersey, certainly. It was segregated. And so that when they built the Prudential apartments, in the Central Ward that was for black people, at the same time, Prudential build Charles Austin homes in the East Ward, and that was for white people. But aside from that there were only maybe four blocks in the central Ward, essentially, where black people lived. One block (other block?) Monmouth Street and Quitman Street and High Street is where Jewish people lived. And that's the other ones that attended Monmouth Street School.

R

Robert Curvin 03:23


What were the relationships like between?

T

Ted Pinckney 03:26

Oh, positive. There was some feeling among the Blacks who had come from the South or are parents had come from the South sort of anti white stories, but the whites that we knew really didn't have harbor very much in the way of dislike of Blacks. There was a sense of superiority. There were a lot of Jews in that neighborhood who just come in from from Europe, escaped from Nazi Germany. And the rest of Nazi Europe. So there was that feeling. Particularly among the older Jews that came in those who spoke Yiddish, and you'd go into store and they'd talk about you in their language. And you had to learn a couple expressions. We were talking about one was Schwatzer (?). "Oh you're a Schwatzer" and they would all laugh because they thought

you didn't know what that meant. Once they realized you knew then that took care of those jokes. But that went on. You couldn't get a job on Prince Street or School St (?) which would be the commercial area, because they- their relatives had all the jobs. So no Blacks worked in any of those little meat markets or grocery stores or anything. And so I think Walter chambers got a job at the A&P. At the same time, Dr. Kellogg was a pharmacist at the drugstore. He then put in a soda fountain. And and I worked there with Lonnie Jackson. There was Francis Warren, his son Billy Keller and Roger Yancey Jr. We were soda soda jerks if you will. So we had jobs on School Street where we work for black pharmacists.

 Robert Curvin 05:02

But there was no, you know, physical conflict or anything like that?

 Ted Pinckney 05:06


No, just that the Savoy Theatre Blacks sat up in what they used to call "nigger heaven". They sat in the balcony.

 Robert Curvin 05:15

And where was that located?

 05:16


Right there on Springfield Avenue. It was west of High Street.

 Robert Curvin 05:21

And they ran movies or live shows?

 Ted Pinckney 05:23

They ran live shows on Saturdays. On Saturday they would give away kitchenware and they'd give away flatware and whatever. And that was live. The rest of it was essentially movies. The live entertainment basically it was downtown. At the at the Adams theater. Yeah.

 Robert Curvin 05:40

Do you remember much about the mob and Longie Zwillman and-

 Ted Pinckney 05:47

Yeah, they were all around. Yeah, we really didn't know them by name at that point. (Unintelligable) commission came into town and then the front page ran these stories, these people about Bioardo and Zwillman. And then there was the period there where we're trying to locate Zwillman and the trial went on without him. He was found innocent. He showed up and said, "Oops, looking for me?" But all that was all that was in paper. These people that, what they wore and silk underwear and \$100 ties they were wearing in those days. So that was really-

R

Robert Curvin 06:24

He was like a mythic mythical figure. Like an icon.

T

Ted Pinckney 06:28

Yeah, yeah. But of course you can play the numbers all of us have.

R

Robert Curvin 06:34

And he ran the numbers.

T

Ted Pinckney 06:35

He ran the the numbers. But that was that was big business in those days. Those were the only gambling Black folk did (?).

R

Robert Curvin 06:44

Yeah. Do you remember Dreamland? And, uh, talk a little bit about that.

T

Ted Pinckney 06:53

Well, you know, the first skating rink was, was on Montgomery Street in Montgomery and Somerset in Newark. And that is that was the first skating rink and they used to have dances there on weekends, and they had live entertainment, and dances.

R

Robert Curvin 07:07

You remember what it was called?

T

Ted Pinckney 07:10

Skateland?

Skateland.

R

Robert Curvin 07:11

Skateland?

T

Ted Pinckney 07:12

I'm sure it was Skateland. And that's when I was very small person. I must have been 10, 10 years old. And then they turned it into a little, that's right. There was some fights that developed, general rowdiness, and they sold that place and it became a truck repair center. After that, then Dreamland opened up for Black people on Thursday night or we could go to Plainfield on Mondays and skate.

R

Robert Curvin 07:45

Was that where Twin City was?



07:47

No, no Dreamland and Twin City they were next to each other.

R

Robert Curvin 07:51

They were next to each other. Right. Right.

T

Ted Pinckney 07:53

Yes. One was in Newark one was in Elizabeth. No Skateland, the other place in Plainfield. That was Monday night for Black folks. Dreamland opened up a Thursday, Thursday. But you couldn't go on Sunday. You couldn't you couldn't go any other time. You went there and you couldn't get in.

R

Robert Curvin 08:14

You couldn't get in right. No, um, actually Bill Payne and Donald and I, with some of our white friends from the suburbs, we would occasionally go there on Sunday, and they would go in the whites would go in and then they try to get us in. Oh, no, no, you have to have a membership card, they would say. But skating was really quite an important cultural, social event. I remember, you know, we would skate around with a girl you know, and sort of do this little dipping to the music or you remember those days right?

—

T

Ted Pinckney 08:53

To meet the the opposite sex. Under really social conditions. I only saw people in school. You had an opportunity relax around people. And you also relaxed around even of your own sex people that you had in common with who didn't live around the corner. Most people I knew lived right around my neighborhood. But by going through Dreamland, I met people like Bob Curvin and (unintelligable) who didn't live in my neighborhood.

R

Robert Curvin 09:20

Right. Right. So what was high school like then? And you said 25% African American at Southside in the early 50s.

T

Ted Pinckney 09:31

Yeah, that's right. And but but accommodating atmosphere. You always have somebody Black elected to one of the class offices. Throughout the schooling. Junior class, vice president or senior class treasurer, you know. So there's always that always been like at Southside. The band was fully integrated, the football team was fully integrated. Back with the we had one coach, basketball coach, guy who's name was Cavallero. He always wanted to keep some White boys on the team, even if it meant losing the game. You had to have white boys out there. And so you lose and because you didn't have your best players in the game. Same with Otto Stoll, he was the football coach. And for several years we had the opportunity to be city champion and we weren't because he kept putting in the wrong guys.

R

Robert Curvin 10:20

And you were aware of that even as a young-?

T

Ted Pinckney 10:23

Oh, yeah, obviously, this guy couldn't play. Here it is third and fourth and two yards, you put the wrong guy in to carry the ball. Doesn't take a genius to figure that one out.

R

Robert Curvin 10:37

When you finished Southside, you immediately went to college?

T

Ted Pinckney 10:42

No I didn't. Initially, while at Southside we took the civil service exam. For some reason or other they invented this so young folks could go into civil service. And so then I passed the exam, I was given a job at the VA downtown Newark. So I went to work down at the VA and I was going to evenings, Seton Hall in the evenings. I had a job and my my parents thought that was great.

I had a government job, which they thought was great. You know civil service and I had a job for life. And I could go to school at night and get a degree and they thought that that was fine for them. For their period. That was good. But I went down to Howard for with a friend of mine, Tom Moore and Dr. Tom Moore to a homecoming. And I saw a Black school having fun going to school. I mean, they were smart guys no question about that. They were learning but they were enjoying themselves. I said, uh, this is me. I want some of this. I'm not going to college, these guys are going to college, I'm not. And so I transferred to Howard in the middle of the year. Packed my bags, (said?) to my mother. I hope, uh, I was admitted. I didn't go but now I'm gonna go. So if they keep me, I'll call you and send the rest of my stuff down. And I did. They accepted me they found room for me in a dormitory and, uh-

R

Robert Curvin 11:59

So you were at Howard then for those middle?

T

Ted Pinckney 12:03

Three and a half.

R

Robert Curvin 12:04

Three and a half. Yeah. And then you got out.

T

Ted Pinckney 12:06

Then I went to the Army.

R

Robert Curvin 12:08

Then you went to the army.

T

Ted Pinckney 12:09

I did two years at Fort Benning, Georgia.

R

Robert Curvin 12:11

Fort Benning.

T

Ted Pinckney 12:12

And then I got out.

R Robert Curvin 12:14
What was the what was the army experience like?

T Ted Pinckney 12:19
I mean, it was dull. It was just plain though. We didn't do any math back then. They had pulled in a lot of people that they didn't need. For some reason or other somebody made a mistake. So they had this whole army of people, division people that they didn't know what to do with it. So we sat around.

R Robert Curvin 12:35
So you never went overseas.

T Ted Pinckney 12:36
No, I worked in General's office. I had coffee and I learned to smoke. I didn't smoke at that time. So I learned because that's all I had to do was drink coffee and smoke. And then go to the movies. So we would go to movies two or three times a week. And then I would play bridge or chess the other days. And that was my army experience. Except when when when couple of friends of mine came down. Gil Benson, ok, Tony Peoples and Jim Brown. The four of us would go up to Atlanta, maybe maybe once a month. (Unintelligable). So that was a pleasant diversion.

R Robert Curvin 13:21
Right. So then you got out of service, then you come back to Newark. And that's when you start teaching or?

T Ted Pinckney 13:29
Yes, I started teaching I first I started at Essex College of Business

R Robert Curvin 13:33
Essex College, which was not part of the Newark School System, was it?

T Ted Pinckney 13:37
No no no it was a private school That was before Essex County College (unintelligable) was

no, no, no, it was a private school. That was before Essex County College (unintelligible) was created. Essex College of Business was on Broad Street. So I was going there and going to - I don't know if I started graduate school yet. At any rate I left there because I realized that, well, I know what happened. My mother had always been on Executive Board of the NAACP of Newark branch she was the adviser to the youth council and as advisor Youth Council, she had a position on the executive board. So my mother (unintelligible) said she'd remain the advisor if you put me on the board in her place. So from school I was immediately put on the Executive Board of the Newark Branch of the NAACP. And most people didn't know where, who, where'd this guy come from. Well that's that's that's really quite unusual. Yeah, yeah. But my mother had been a member forever, met Grace Fenderson who was one of the founding-

R

Robert Curvin 14:41

So do you remember Miss Fenderson?

T

Ted Pinckney 14:43

Oh I knew her very very well.

R

Robert Curvin 14:45

You knew her well. Wow.

T

Ted Pinckney 14:47

The other thing I wanted to say was is that at the time they were asked people who were nobody was able nobody. Few blacks would pass the written exam. Very few would pass the written exam. So the NAACP sued that there was discrimination dejour whatever. The fact that (unintelligible) it was popular at the time. Right. So CB(??) wanted me to go take the test because word was I would probably be alright. And I feel comfortable [I'd have] no problem at all. So I took the test. And then Pinckney is not a Johnson or Smith name so they didn't know who I was. And so I walked in take the oral exam and they were surprised that I wasn't white. Since, I'm number one on the list, they didn't quite know what to do. It turns out I was number one, and Jim Barrett was number two who was also Black.

R

Robert Curvin 15:35

After the oral exam, or after the written exam?

T

Ted Pinckney 15:39

After the written exam. You schedule, right in that order for your oral and it turns out that on my oral board, was a girl who gone to high school with me, Geraldine Riley. So then they didn't they were really confused, because she told them upfront because she knew me, she would not

vote. But I know who that is. So what to do. End result, they I passed me. Both written and then the oral.

R

Robert Curvin 16:11

And you were an exception to a fancy oral. What was the scheme that they were using?

T

Ted Pinckney 16:17

They'd put what name on it certain name, and they were as your sponsor and they would know who to pass and

R

Robert Curvin 16:23

who to fail.

T

Ted Pinckney 16:24

Who to fail that's right. So I um.

R

Robert Curvin 16:28

And they'd make an assumption that all blacks were more likely to fail the oral because they were less articulate than whites.

T

Ted Pinckney 16:36

Yeah, sure.

R

Robert Curvin 16:41

And so you can-

T

Ted Pinckney 16:42

(Unintelligible). Oh, then the next thing they did to the blacks was to send you to elementary school, or junior high schools. Since I didn't have elementary school credentials. They sent all other blacks to West Kinney. All the blacks in the world were teaching at West Kinney. Most of them were substitutes. So they asked me would I accept a position at West Kinney? I said no. I was a junior high school teacher. I'd been teaching advanced courses calculus, like geometry. That's what I knew how to do and that I wasn't interested in teaching arithmetic. So I turned

down the job. And then they didn't know quite what to do. As usual, they didn't know what to do. And then they sent me a letter and they told me report to Central High School for my teaching. They didn't tell me when, didn't tell me who to go and see, anything. So Jerry called me up and said that report to school on Thursday.

R

Robert Curvin 17:34

Gerry?

T

Ted Pinckney 17:34

Gerry Riley the same woman I knew on the Board. She said yeah, I know, they didn't tell you that they never do. But she knew, but I didn't know I wouldn't. I wouldn't have gone. So I walked into Central High School in office. And as usual, in those days, if you're black, they ignore you. So I'm standing there at the front counter. And the clerks are all walking around everybody's walking around. And there's somebody ignoring this person standing there. And it was when I had to use my Third Ward attitude. And they decided that Oh, yes, sir. And they realized that they had a teacher assigned but they had no schedule for him. Apparently, they the decision had been made downtown to send me to Central. But they didn't tell people at Central. So they didn't know quite what to do. So they scrambled around and got a schedule together for me. And I had five classes in five different rooms. And I had to carry my papers in my my office was my briefcase. But they got it together finally.

R

Robert Curvin 18:36

And you were a Central (unintelligible)

T

Ted Pinckney 18:37

Oh yeah so I left Central. That was (?) Neighborhood Youth Corp. I was promoted.

R

Robert Curvin 18:41

During the 60s.

T

Ted Pinckney 18:42

Yes, that's correct. Oral exam, promotional exam. So I took that. And then I got the job as Director of Neighborhood Youth Corps.

R

Robert Curvin 18:53

Now Addonizio was running the Neighborhood Youth Corps at that time?

T

Ted Pinckney 18:57

Well, no, that's the board. They were two at that time, there were two. There was the city Neighborhood Youth Corp program for out of school youth and that was run by City Hall, Arthur Kauffman, I think, ran that that side of the street, Then there's the Board of Education Program was the in school, Neighborhood Youth Corp and that was run by the Board of Education. And I was then director of that program.

R

Robert Curvin 19:18

So you ran the Board of Ed program.

T

Ted Pinckney 19:20

The one was in school program and other was the people that were out of school.

R

Robert Curvin 19:24

Yeah. So at what, at what point? Did you decide that you wanted to be more active politically? Because because I remember you participating in CORE activities as well as political activities.

T

Ted Pinckney 19:41

Well, what happened is that we, uh, I was on the executive board of NAACP, [I became] housing department chairman, housing, department, housing, well housing chair and I began getting to meet people and becoming more and more involved. I really didn't know anything about housing. Just discriminat- I knew that we didn't live certain places, but I hadn't really thought why. But that as I began to get more and more involved I began to understand in the city that what the problems were and where we had to go to find solutions. And well up with C. B. Norris's NAACP, they focused on certain specific things. And other things you do what you want to do. So CORE had had had an agenda, and things that they were interested in. And so we were free to participate in those things, if you chose to. I remember when we picketed Western Electric, with CORE. And my wife was the only one, only Western employee who didn't cross the picket line. And so after it was all over, she then walked in and on the sign in book they had her on the picket. And, but then they promoted her next time. Those who didn't picket not only did they not get promoted they also got downsized. But Joan stayed outside while we picketed and wouldn't cross the line. And after that, I saw pictures that Western people had taken of us on the line. And had names down of all the people out there on the line. I remember that it was really strange because they had a photographer up in a tree. There was a tree near the picket line, and there was this photographer. I thought it was an FBI agent. It was it was probably a Western Electric employee. The guy I met the guy who took those pictures later on, I can't think of this guy's name Boar-, Boar

R

Robert Curvin 21:38

Boardman.

T

Ted Pinckney 21:38

Boardman. Hank Boardman. All right, well this guy worked for for Hank Boardman and later on after we were involved with the other organizations and things the guy showed me pictures that he had taken. And he had been the guy up in the tree, I guess. Take, taking-

R

Robert Curvin 21:55

Taking pictures. Interesting. Interesting. Well, that was one of the more fascinating things that we did, because I don't know if you ever heard the story. The reason we picketed Western Electric was Hank Boardman was the guest speaker at an Urban League event. And he gave this speech about the the how the corporate community had to wake up and realize that the Civil Rights Movement wasn't in Alabama it wasn't in Georgia, but it was right at your doorsteps. And we were looking at each other. We were at the table, looking at it saying, you know, we can't even get a meeting with this guy. And he's telling us that, so we decided to picket the next morning. We all went home and made phone calls and got everybody out and whatnot. But it was very interesting, because they turned out to be very responsive, ultimately.

T

Ted Pinckney 22:57

Talking about Hank Boardman at some point, I became co chairman of uh, BICC.

R

Robert Curvin 23:04

The Business Industrial Coordinating Council?

T

Ted Pinckney 23:06

Ken Gibson had been the co-chairman. And then in 66 when he ran for (public?) office. He was asked to step down. Business Committee did not want to be involved. So then I was asked to take over as co-chair. All the committees of BICC had black and white, it's called Civil Rights in Business, but it was really black and white. And it turns out that Hank Boardman then was one of my was chairman of one of my committees. And he and well, the guy was Vice Principal, at Westside High School, was his co chair at West Side High School? Oh, really. I'll think of it in a minute. And then that didn't work out. So then I asked him to step down, and I appointed Gene Campbell in his place, because this guy was a nice guy, but more of that era, but who went along with the white guys , he always went along. Nice guy. You know, he's kind of guy that they liked. He'd would always go along. Right. And I wanted somebody just a bit more, a bit, a bit more feisty. So I asked Gene Campbell. So anyway, so that's how I began work with Hank Boardman and then worked with (unintelligable) of that community.

R

Robert Curvin 24:34

It was really interesting that relationships did develop out of those conflicts. And I when I interviewed Bob Bender, who was White who had been in ADA, he talked about his relationship with Hank Boardman going on for years after 1960. They stayed in touch. And I remember Charlie Garrison from Bamberger's you remember him and he was he became a very ardent supporter of the affirmative action efforts that were being promoted by the, by the BICC. And whatever happened to Bill Mercer

T

Ted Pinckney 25:20

He moved to Washington DC. And then we kind of never saw him again. I think he had sugar diabetes and began to lose limbs and, and so, but he never moved back to Newark,

R

Robert Curvin 25:33

He never moved back. Yeah. So when did you decide to get more directly involved in politics?

T

Ted Pinckney 25:41

Well, we began, I guess it was in 1964, when Jim Churchman ran for state senate as a Republican, and that was right after Goldwater had been the Democrat the Republican nominee in 62. Right, so that 64 was no time for Republican black green or purple. Or whatever. But Churchman-

R

Robert Curvin 26:04

Yeah. Actually the Goldwater race was in 64.

T

Ted Pinckney 26:09

Okay, all right. Okay. At any rate, there was no time for for Republicans. So we had-

R

Robert Curvin 26:17

Certainly not in the Third Ward of Newark.

T

Ted Pinckney 26:19

Well, actually we ran. I think they may have been at large at that point. I don't I'm not certain I think they may have been, you know, they were everybody ran at large.

R

Robert Curvin 26:33

I Right. Exactly. District yeah right.

T

Ted Pinckney 26:36

There were two senators for Essex County and then there were I guess whatever number of Assemblyman. And Churchman ran for for the Senate. And he ran in ran against Inge. Doctor Inge. Right from East Orange? Yeah, no, no, no, no, no, that was his that was his brother. Oh, this Inge had an office on West Market street. But everybody thought it was the one in East Orange. He was one that was active in politics. The one on West Market Street everybody knew him. And so they voted for him. So though we ran a good, a good, a good race. Church did very well. It was just not the year for Republicans. But what happened is that Church's headquarters was right next door to the Democratic headquarters. Honey Ward and Russel Bigham and all that crowd. So we began to meet them. I used to talk with em all the time. And we were fighting one another. But then we'd sit down and have a cocktail together and up at the Alpha, up at that time was the drinking place. And we got to know those guys and then realized that there were room for a movement for black politicians being being structured along Democrat and Republican lines didn't make any difference City of Newark because it was a nonpartisan election. So there was actually no reason why we should not cooperate and work together. It was in from that beginning, my involvement in (unintelligable) that where I then met these other guys and began to work, but it was after that we formed an organization called BIC (Boys Information Council). And we began to have meetings up at the labor union labor Hall, and got involved in trying to get people elected to office. Initially for, I guess, in 66, when Ken Gibson ran. And George Richardson and whatever. But none of us had ever been involved in, directly involved in politics, in politics of any kind. Maybe High School politics, but nothing. So we got involved with that. And that was essentially a learning curve for us. It was after that in 68. When I ran against Imperiale for Newark City Council. It was the only time, all my guys had never been involved in elected politics. And very many of my friends involved didn't live in Newark. But they came to help and work but the contact wasn't there with the folks people know them didn't know me. Right. And so Imperiale won.

R

Robert Curvin 28:58

Imperiale won that race.

T

Ted Pinckney 29:00

He won that race because that community was organized. Our community was not organized. (Unintelligable) find the organizing in our community while being involved in a political campaign.

R

Robert Curvin 29:13

But this was just after the rebellion.

T Ted Pinckney 29:16
Yes, that was 68.

R Robert Curvin 29:18
It was 68 so the rebellion was 67.

T Ted Pinckney 29:21
So what that happened was in the chronology, we had the 66 election where Ken Gibson was the only poor guy who ran for mayor and we tried to do something.

R Robert Curvin 29:30
And Calvin won the-

T Ted Pinckney 29:31
And Calvin won at large but he ran on their ticket, on the Addonizio ticket. So essentially they elected Calvin. So that was 66. Then 67 there was the rebellion. And then 68 there was in the at that point Addonizio and Imperiale was running strong. He had the tanks and he had getting money from Nutley. So he had convinced people in Nutley and Belleville, that he this last point to keep blacks moving out of Newark and moving on there. So they gave him money to cover up this North Ward to keep the blacks out of the north ward then they would never get the Belleville and never get to Nutley. That was his source of funds. And they they showered him with money. And then then from there, however, is when we, we reorganized. We had a better notion of elected politics and of our own community where our weaknesses and where our strengths were. And got in motion for 70. When we were successful, and looking at some of the but Imperiale won again, and so (unintelligable) won again. From my team only one guy and that was Earl Harris.

R Robert Curvin 30:49
Right. Right. Then you ran on the on the Community choice ticket and endorsed by the convention.

T Ted Pinckney 30:57
Yeah, convention both conventions. I was endorsed both conventions.



R

Robert Curvin 31:00

By the convention in 68.

T

Ted Pinckney 31:01

Yeah, right. Yeah, the one at Clinton Place Junior High

R

Robert Curvin 31:07

That was in 70?

T

Ted Pinckney 31:10

No, no, no, that was at West Kinney in 70. That was the one at West Kinney.

R

Robert Curvin 31:16

I ran the convention in 70. So, I think I remember. It was, it was Clinton Place. You know, let me tell you the story about the convention, Ken came to me in 1960, late 68, 69 and said, you know, Baraka ran this convention, in 68. And he wants, he wants to run another convention in 70. But if he runs a convention, we're dead. He said, so I want you to help me figure out how we're going to organize a convention ourselves. And that's how we put together the coalition that included Ruth Maclean and Jim Paulie and Dr. Werner and whatnot. And then we went to Baraka and said, you know, we want to do this. And he was very supportive. He and as you know, his guys all joined the convention committee, and they were some of the most effective foot troops that we had in the thing. But the whole story of that is really very, very, quite, quite fascinating. And also interesting to hear Ken Gibson's reflections today, on the association with Baraka and compare them with what he was saying, back then. Anyway, so after 1970, did you move into the administration? Or?

T

Ted Pinckney 32:45

What happened is that I've been working for the, for the board. Yeah. And then I was fighting the board. And that seemed to me to be a bad idea. So I then took a leave of absence from the board and went for the icbl, In Rich (?) Council of business opportunity. And I was there for several years, a couple of years. From there I went to uh to project SEED. I was the co-chairman of BICC. And we had a federally funded program that we're running. And we needed an executive director. So I resigned as chairman of the BICC took a job, executive director of Project SEED.

R

Robert Curvin 33:19

This was in 1970.

T Ted Pinckney 33:21
It was after 70.

R Robert Curvin 33:22
After 70. So the BICC still was sputtering along.

T Ted Pinckney 33:26
Yeah but it was almost on life support. Because the business community had gone to what was that thing that Gus?

R Robert Curvin 33:33
The, uh, Urban Coalition.

T Ted Pinckney 33:34
Urban Coalition. So business began to pull money back out of BICC. Put money into the Urban Coalition.

R Robert Curvin 33:42
The Urban Coalition.

T Ted Pinckney 33:46
So after that then from BICC I went to Newark Preschool council. And I was there for a couple of years.

R Robert Curvin 33:56
With Becky?

T Ted Pinckney 33:58
No, Becky left. She left. I went right, right behind her as the executive director for the move to our own building. We had gotten the building donated, and so we began getting our own properties rather than being in basically churches.

R Robert Curvin 34:23
Spending a lot of money of leases.

T Ted Pinckney 34:25
And building nothing, we were given some money but we had nothing at the end of the year. And that was a whole nother kind of experience.

R Robert Curvin 34:35
So as you look back and you reflect on a life of action and activity. What are your thoughts about about Mayoral leadership in the city Gibson? James?

T Ted Pinckney 34:52
Well the Gibson years were not were not productive. They were very very disappointing. We had a number of projects that we thought we were gonna be successful but didn't turn out. One one that I was very much committed to, was, uh, the bank. And we formed another organization, called Medic medic enterprises, which we had federal funding. And there were several projects that we were involved in and there were couple that I was particularly interested in and one was forming the bank. The problem was is that two competing organizations applied for a charter at the same time. Charlie Whigham with the City National Bank Group, and our group Progressive National Bank. And since Charlie's group had submitted first they were the first they were approved, and we were pending. So they got a million and a half dollars in opening, we got a million dollars couldn't get the half. And it's never opened. So we had to send a million dollars back. Folks who had who invested invested in in the corporation, and hence and we never opened, it turns out. They were right. Newark could not support two black banks. They were right. We were wrong. But we still went ahead with it. We thought we were right. And it turned out. And so then people who lost-

R Robert Curvin 36:08
You think Ken Gibson could have played

T Ted Pinckney 36:11
if he had tried, he didn't try

R Robert Curvin 36:13
If he had tried.

T Ted Pinckney 36:14

So those who lost money were those that were found it. Investors could not lose any money against (unintelligible). But those of us involved in putting it together, lost, lost, personal. LRB Washington, the Doctor, Harry Hazelwood, attorney, judge. Who else?

R Robert Curvin 36:33

You had a very prestigious group of supporters.

T Ted Pinckney 36:37

Yeah, I think at some point, it was probably our problem. Most of them were involved in, were involved with college graduates on our side. And we still weren't that accepted among the general Newark community. Right. The expression was those days, "Oh here comes another one of those educated fools." That was a very popular expression, you know the politics up at that point.

R Robert Curvin 37:04

So college graduates were in the black community were somewhat unusual at that time.

T Ted Pinckney 37:10

Yeah, yeah. The politics of Newark was Irvine Turner and that, uh.

R Robert Curvin 37:15

We haven't talked about Irvine Turner yet. So, what are your thoughts about Turner? You remember his initial election, I'm sure.

T Ted Pinckney 37:24

Well I wasn't here. I knew about it. I was in Washington. No, but I knew him personally. Uh, yeah. He was a guy who was a fighter, he meant well, yeah. But he didn't have a lot of ability. And so he would stand in the street corner and talk trash and make great speeches. When you'd go down to the meetings he was the rubber stamp for Addonizio. Everything whatever it was. He'd stand up and make a great speech. He'd go right downtown and vote the opposite. Cause the black folks didn't go down to the city council meetings, either. I mean, nobody went down there, didn't even know they had meetings. So he'd go down there and do whatever needed to be done. (Unintelligible) you realize among his peers. He was almost Uncle Tom. I thought you were the leader, you're not the leader.

R

Robert Curvin 37:30

You did? Yeah, right.

T

Ted Pinckney 38:12

And now we got, well, Charlie Matthews was supposed to be a big time Democrat he was a freeholder. Went down to see Charlie. Cause in those days, to get a job you had to go see somebody. Went down to see Charlie and he had a desk over in the corner, that he really came and sat at. So he was nobody. Yeah, go see him. Are you kidding me? He was nobody. At that time, Larrie Stalks was a clerk in the Water Department. She made \$3,500 a year. And she was secretary's aide to Addonizio who's the Congressman. So that was her big job. And that's that was the big jobs and it was later that that. Because of other pressures, (Unintelligable) came along, etc, etc, etc. I came along as Director. By my going down to the board. No Black had ever had the secretary. That was how they kept me in place. Then you wanted something typed, you had to go ask another secretary do it for you. You had to go around with your paper in your hand begging to get something typed. But because I had my own program, not my program. Program was funded separately government program. I had funding for a clerical support. And then I went down to see Dan Norton who then was (unintelligable) schools in charge of Personnel. I was turned down and turned down, all getting all kind of excuses. So finally because I was wasn't very well trained. I'm gonna hire my own person and put her on the payroll, I got the budget, I got the money, she goes to work. And they didn't quite know what to do as usual. So they gave the girl the job but turns out girl has already worked at the board. She gets a \$1200 raise by coming to work for me. Which also made them angry, but they couldn't do very much about because she has her own level of friends there at the board. They all knew her the white women, the black women. They all knew that she was a very nice person and they believe they thought she was entitled to the upgrade. And so, that's how I got a administrative assistant.

R

Robert Curvin 40:07

So what you're suggesting is that most of the job allocations were related to some kind of politics. Particularly for black people.

T

Ted Pinckney 40:17

Yes. Well, black people, no, completely for Black people. And you had to have a sponsor to even get an appointment. All right. To apply for a job.

R

Robert Curvin 40:32

It's kind of interesting to hear people talk about merit, these days, right? Oh, yeah. Knowing the way in which things were were done. Yeah. What about Sharpe? How do you how do you view Sharpe's?

T Ted Pinckney 40:47

Sharpe's tenure as Mayor? Well at least he came in with with a do something attitude. He had been there for eight years, actually, 16 years of no, no movement So he came in with a with a to do.

R Robert Curvin 41:05

You mean, the Gibson years was, you described as no movement, slow.

T Ted Pinckney 41:09

Slow and nothing happened. If you took him a proposal it sat on his desk, and he would say, I've got a lot of decisions to make. You see all these decisions I've got to make. You see all proposals were sitting on his desk, but he made no decisions. And they simply sat there and Sharpe at that time (unintelligable). He said, man, don't come and tell me about a problem. I got my own problems. You come in with with a to do. If you don't have a to do, right, then don't don't bother me. I don't need new problems. So you go see Sharpe and just tell him what it is you want to do and why you want to do it. If he wanted to do it, he said ok, he didn't, it didn't get done. But at least he began with a desire to do things. And he wanted to put his name on things, which ended up getting him in trouble. But he didn't do anything about that problem, except put his name on it. And then he had to pay your dues by going to jail.

R Robert Curvin 42:01

Yeah, yeah. Oh, my sense is that he had a lot of things going for him actually, he had, he knew the government. He had been there 16 years. He knew City Hall. He had connections in the city, outside of the city. Path came along, and he played a major role in getting that built in Newark. But somewhere along the line, he seemed to lose his- sense of focus.

T Ted Pinckney 42:30

He lost focus. He stayed in office too long.

R Robert Curvin 42:33

Stayed in office too long. Yeah, a lot of people say that, you know that he could have been saved by term limits. Maybe 8, 12 years would have been enough for him.

T Ted Pinckney 42:45

He wanted to do one term more than Gibson. That was his objective. Gibson did four terms he wanted to do five. (Unintelligable)

R

Robert Curvin 42:56

Right, yeah. And the truth is that most of the the things that I think he was doing never got exposed even during the indictment because I mean, what he what they got him for was-

T

Ted Pinckney 43:14

I sat through the trial and had to agree with Braun of the Star Ledger. I don't know which trial the jury sat through. It couldn't have been that one. Not when they found guilty of everything, and they didn't prove everything. Most of it they didn't prove at all. The juror who said, the quote in paper, saying that, well, they didn't prove anything in particular so we found guilty of everything cause we knew he was guilty of something. That's what the juror said. I mean, something like the mail fraud thing...that they talk about. He'd never received it nor did he mail it. But they found it in the storage, in a locker. They wasn't addressed to him and wasn't from him. But they said it was a letter and therefore it was mail then it was fail fraud (?). And it turns out the guy who wrote the letter was disbarred lawyer, who's now in South Carolina, who said he put a lot of puffery in the letter and the lady whoever name is, she was the one who delivered the letter. He had no idea how it got delivered. Or even why it was in-

R

Robert Curvin 44:17

What was the letter about?

T

Ted Pinckney 44:19

Oh recommending recommending her for for the money.

R

Robert Curvin 44:22

For the money, I see.

T

Ted Pinckney 44:23

Yeah, recommending her for the money. She's done an outstanding job at something which wasn't true and she's done this which wasn't true. And so she that was a letter that was someone in Sharpe's locker, that the City was supposed to pay for and that's how it got exposed. Tamika, her name was. That's right.

R

Robert Curvin 44:42

Tamika Riley. Yeah. Yeah. Do you have any any observations about political leadership in Newark today? And what's changed and what's different?

T Ted Pinckney 44:56

Well I think what's interesting is the City Council today. They're all the children of college graduates the black ones. Which is quite quite different from from when we were coming along. And that's just a generation removed. Now they're all the children of college graduates. Right. Including Mildred.

R Robert Curvin 45:17

Including Mildred? Her family, in Cincinnati?

T Ted Pinckney 45:22

Detroit.

R Robert Curvin 45:23

Detroit, Detroit. Yeah. Very interesting. Yeah. Yeah.

T Ted Pinckney 45:29

And so that's a big change. From from when we were coming along, because graduates weren't trusted, as opposed to being in charge of everything.

R Robert Curvin 45:37

Have they demonstrated that, though, education really makes a difference?

T Ted Pinckney 45:41

Makes a difference? No!

R Robert Curvin 45:43

I think that's what we're waiting for. Yeah. It'll be interesting to see how this Council works out. What about Booker? What's your what are your thoughts?

T Ted Pinckney 45:52

I really I never really had a chance to talk to Booker

I really I never really had a chance to talk to Booker.

R

Robert Curvin 45:54

You haven't talked to him?

T

Ted Pinckney 45:55

I never talked to him, I shook his hand maybe once or twice. Polite but but I've never sat down.

R

Robert Curvin 46:04

You don't have any sense of anything changing in terms of services or police protection? Crime?

T

Ted Pinckney 46:12

No, our neighborhood has always been fairly safe. We moved here in 1980 and which point Carrino lived the corner. And now Amador (?) lives around the corner. We did have more judges in the neighborhood, when we moved in, more county judges. Now the last county judge we have is a (unintelligible) and he's moving today.

R

Robert Curvin 46:30

Oh, really? Moving today? Who is this?

T

Ted Pinckney 46:31

Yeah, he's moving today Clark Coleman. Clark(?) Coleman. But prior to that all the houses big houses along here were all occupied by county judges. And the county and the sheriff's department would patrol a block up in the park. By statute of whatever. The county police only operate on county property, which is the park. But somehow they got I don't know how they did it, a block, beyond the park, they also could patrol. They used to patrol the area. And I'm a block and a half above the park.

R

Robert Curvin 47:06

This is a this is a very, very interesting point. Because the point is that it makes a difference who lives in the neighborhood. In terms of the kind of security and protection that you're going to get not to mention the kind of behavior you're gonna have. But also the kind of service that you're gonna get.

T Ted Pinckney 47:31
We had two police directors lived [around the corner]. Hubert Williams, lived around the corner.

R Robert Curvin 47:36
He still lives here?

T Ted Pinckney 47:37
No. I don't know who has the house. No, he's in Maryland or something?

R Robert Curvin 47:41
He's moved out finally. Finally moved out of the city.

T Ted Pinckney 47:44
Right. And after that he left we then had Celester he lived on the other block around the corner. Cause Celester went to jail. But he was still at the time police director,

R Robert Curvin 47:54
Right. He was the guy from Boston. That Sharpe had recruited. Yeah. Yeah.

T Ted Pinckney 48:00
So that, uh, we had people around, which made a difference. The prosecuter (unintelligable) still lives around. Prosecutor he just ran for mayor of Newark. He lives around the corner.

R Robert Curvin 48:12
He lives around the corner.

T Ted Pinckney 48:15
So that's yeah, yes. Folks around and and there was protection. Gail Cheneyfield lived block over.

R Robert Curvin 48:25

So it's it's a, it's an area that very much like, the far part of the South ward where a lot of people who are of the leadership group in Newark are. What about the future of the city? What are your what are your thoughts?

T

Ted Pinckney 48:45

I would ride around and I'd see a lot of construction going on during Sharpe's period. Yeah, that was that was a period of bust. A boom. I guess, not a bust. Yeah but now we got the bust. But but that's not the Mayor's fault.

R

Robert Curvin 49:00

No not at all.

T

Ted Pinckney 49:01

Yeah. But there's a lot of construction has now been halted then cut off. Before you saw activities stuff is going down, stuff going up. Well, now it's just sitting idle. But that's not City Council's fault or the Mayor's fault. So we kind of stagnant at this point.

R

Robert Curvin 49:17

And the economy really hits a city like Newark when it goes down Newark, Newark feels it. Yeah, yeah. Yeah.

T

Ted Pinckney 49:27

Because there aren't that many professional jobs (unintelligabl) just available. So there are no jobs in manufacturing at any level, you know?

R

Robert Curvin 49:37

Yeah, yeah.

T

Ted Pinckney 49:41

You can only pay so many doctors. Money runs out, no matter how much you charge, the money runs out. And the lawyers are trying to find jobs. They got plenty of clients. It's the clients don't have any money.

R

Robert Curvin 49:55

Yeah. Now over the years, you worked with a lot of young people and seen a lot of youth. And needless to say, one of the mantras that you hear of some of our old folks, is that the young people today are, are different. They don't they don't live by the standards or the values that we had back in the 50s. Where you could go anyplace on the bus and feel, you know, that there was it was perfectly okay. Well, but what what do we need to say to young people today about?

T

Ted Pinckney 50:27

I remember the Newark in which I grew up, where we didn't have cars, so to speak of. But we walked every place, we walked every place. And finally, when you get when we got access to a car, you could park it anyplace. So that was (unintelligible). Now you'd have a generation of kids who've grown up in the house, but they don't go out. They watch television, they don't read, but whatever. They play games, video games, and they look at TV, so there's less and less social interaction. It seems then that when they do they fight. They had the skating rink on 22, which was popular for about a minute but they always had to fight. So I think the town Union made them close it up. Well, because they whenever they get they get together, there was a problem. If you try to go see a movie at Newark Screens they're making noise and then talking all during the movie. And so adults don't go. Hence the theater has gone bankrupt I think. They've had a hard time Because of the the lack of social graces or whatever. Young people, (don't?) listen, disregard the rules. They've grown up isolated.

R

Robert Curvin 51:40

So but where have we lost? Our civility is television, television.

T

Ted Pinckney 51:49

We don't live out outdoors anymore. Among get along with the neighbors, thinks like that. We've become-- I remmeber there was a movie on not too long ago, this was old movie, black and white movie Streets of New York or Naked City or whatever and they began to show the New York of that time, where people lived in the street, they didn't have air conditioning. They didn't have all these freezers. You bought your groceries every day or so. And people lived in the street among there were crowds of people all the time buying and moving, getting the bus.

R

Robert Curvin 52:24

In the hot weather you were outside on the porch.

T

Ted Pinckney 52:27

That was that was. But now when TV came. And perhaps our entertainment was going to the movies. And that was that was entertainment. TV came along. So we actually began to come indoors. And then air conditioning, people came indoors. So you have very few people outside. Except maybe people selling dope. And then they're shooting at one another. And that's the

group that are outside. You don't go out unless you absolutely have to. You go run to the store you might get shot. So people aren't out. And hence there's less social interaction. And no social graces.

R

Robert Curvin 53:11

So has where have we failed? I mean, where-

T

Ted Pinckney 53:17

The only place we have to work is in the schools. And they keep cutting the budget. They keep cutting out programs. I remember when we grew up it was during the war and they put a lot of money into afterschool programs for mothers would suddenly go into work then in the war plants. So after school we had some place for the kids to be. Actually had programs in playgrounds for the kids after school would come there and the playground would mind the children. But then that somebody says that cost money it was a budget [unintelligible] and that was cut up. So you don't have that kind of access, the YMCA we used to go to, that's not there anymore. The Boys and Girls Club. They're not there the way they were. There was varsity athletics at the high school but then with the sub varsity right at these other places other activities. So if you weren't good enough to play varsity at the at the high school you may have been able to play varsity on one of the teams at the Y or the Boys Club and you'd travel around to different Ys and play. So there was there was something to do. You could find your your your niche. Now, none of that's here.

R

Robert Curvin 54:27

It doesn't exist. Yeah, we so we've lost the the infrastructure to support youth.

T

Ted Pinckney 54:34

The civilizing activities.

R

Robert Curvin 54:37

And basically turned it over to television, which has a lot of the negative this program what is this guy who has the crazy people that come on and open up and talk about their their they fight with each other and Larry Larry Springer, yeah, yeah, yeah, those young kids watch that stuff. You go to a barber shop-

T

Ted Pinckney 55:02

Actually, what's unfortunate is that the parents watch it. And that's the behavior that the parents exhibit. You see these guys 40 years over got caps turned on backwards, and the pants hanging out behind their butts, and their 40 years old. I mean 50 is one thing right but 40? And

his daddy was showing a crack in his butt. But that's what he sees on TV too. So that's what's raising the kid. The hat on backwards and whatever. The bling hanging around the neck and that's the daddy or it might be the granddaddy. Yeah. Yeah. And they think it's cool. And it's, it's an act of risk and courage to stop one of them and say, "Hey, you know-" You don't stop anybody. (Unintelligible). You keep walking. But instead of putting the money where we just continue to cut, cut, cut, cut. And then and then spend the money on jails

R

Robert Curvin 56:07

On jails. We spend a lot of money in jails. Yeah. You think that the issue of race and racism is still relevant?

T

Ted Pinckney 56:20

(Unintelligible) you mentioned that. Sunday, there were a couple broadcasts on and there are black politicians on talking about economics and war. At no time, were they asked about race, race relations. I remember if I would see a black face on TV, they were discussing civil rights. That's all they ever talked about was Civil rights. And yet there were two shows on Sunday that I watched. Ford was one, on Meet the Press, and there was another show. Where they talked about political things, economy and the war and the oil and, at no time they talk about what the black people think about the war. Now there was a time, that would have been the only reason to be there. But none of the programs did they discuss how black folks felt about the war. So I think that is a big difference from when we will be coming up.

R

Robert Curvin 57:10

Now, is that both a positive and a negative?

T

Ted Pinckney 57:14

I think it's positive because we've finally been seeing something more than black and white.

R

Robert Curvin 57:18

A broad interpretation?

T

Ted Pinckney 57:21

I know when I was in high school. Brotherhood week, I would go, I'd be invited to go over to the Newark radio station WBGO at that time. It's still BGO (unintelligible). Anyway, once a year, I'd be on there as a spokesman. About what black folks thought about, whatever, whatever brotherhood. Yeah, and that was just the only time that was on the radio was during Brotherhood Week. Once a year, I'd go to the Jewish Y on High Street. YMYHA and we would then have a social conversation, like a swim in the pool. And that was it once a year,

Brotherhood Week. I'd be the representative for the Newark Y, for the Court Street Y. Christian Association Y over to the Hebrew Association. I would be the representative of all the black folks at the Y. Yeah, and I could swim in the pool one day a year. So yeah, that has changed and I guess people are being seen in other lights, at least, you know, beyond your skin and color.

R Robert Curvin 58:30

Which is a real positive, yeah.

T Ted Pinckney 58:32

Yeah. I think it's it's a step up.

R Robert Curvin 58:34

It's a step up. Well, let me ask if you have any final remarks that you want to record for posterity?

T Ted Pinckney 58:48

No, I'm hopeful. And I'm interested to hear as as as we see some of the Blacks move out and places are being taken over by whites. So little by little unless there's a change this neighborhood could become white again. A Black family moves and a White family is buying the property, moving in.

R Robert Curvin 59:13


You see this happening more?


T Ted Pinckney 59:15

Yeah, big house. Toni Jones's house that lived next to Claudia and Barbara. She sold that house and then somebody bought that. Well anyway the big houses, costs around 800, 900 thousand dollars. Are being purchased by Caucasians. Or Hispanics. Or Hispanic. Yeah. But Hispanic are Caucasian, Hispanic as opposed to I guess African (?). Yeah. And the big houses are going (unintelligible)

R Robert Curvin 59:47

well, listen, this has been great Ted. I really appreciate it. I'm gonna make a copy. And so you have your own copy for for your archive.

 Ted Pinckney 59:57
Okay, excellent.

 Robert Curvin 59:57
Thanks a lot. Great.